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If the World Persecuted Me, They Will Persecute You

John 15:18 to 16:4

On the walk to Gethsemane sometime between 11:00 pm and midnight, the fifteenth of Nisan

If the world persecuted Me, they will persecute you DIG: Since the emphasis in John 15:12-17 was on love, why does Yeshua now talk about hate? How is the relationship of the apostles to the world like that of Christ's relationship to the world? What does Messiah mean here by the world? What lesson did the Lord teach by the phrase no slave is above his master? What lesson did Jesus teach by the phrase no slave is greater than his master in Yochanan 13:16? What is the lesson here? What do you see about the relationship between the Father, Messiah and the talmidim? How has the coming of the Shield of our Salvation highlighted the reality and wickedness of sin?

REFLECT: When have you found that speaking truth and showing love can lead to hostility from others? How do you explain that? If you were put on trial for being a believer, would there be enough evidence to convict? Have you ever been hated for your love for Jesus Christ? Did it strengthen your faith or weaken it?

When **the Lord** earlier had sent **the Twelve** on a special mission, **He** had warned **them** that they would be as sheep among the wolves (**to see link click Fk – Jesus Sends Out the Twelve Apostles**). In sending **them** into **the world** on this occasion, **Yeshua** reminded **them** that **they** would experience the same **hatred** that **He** had experienced.

The relationship of believers to the world: If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated Me first (Yochanan 15:18). The **world's hate** for believers

stems from its **hate** for **the Messiah**. **Its hatred** is mentioned seven times in these verses. Those **apostles** to whom **Yeshua** was speaking actually saw and experienced what **He** did. **They** were **hated** by people who didn't want to give up their sin and live righteously **(John 16:7-11)**.[1455] **Jesus** identified the enemy of **God's** Kingdom as **the world**, which represents **the** fallen **world** system that operates according to the devil's values and is subject to the curse of sin (see my commentary on **Genesis Bg – Cursed is the Ground Because of You, Through Painful Toil You Will Eat of It**). **The world** also represents the portion of humanity that lives by **its** own values and willingly serves its ends. **Jesus** came to redeem **the world**, but was rejected. **His** crucifixion formally declared the dividing line between the kingdom of **God** and the kingdom of the great dragon. There are only two kinds of spiritual food: there's angel's food and devil's food. And if you aren't eating one . . . you're eating the other.

If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. The world either **loves** or **hates**; there is no middle ground. **As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you (John 15:19). The world** is tolerant as long as you agree with everything that is contrary to the Word of **God**. However, once you present the Gospel of **Jesus Christ** plainly, **the world** becomes extremely *intolerant*. Pseudo tolerance will give way to **hatred** and **they** will give full vent to their anger. The records of times past are proof that the cycle of **hatred** will come around again.

All of us know what it's like to be in a house that's not our own. Perhaps you've rented, spent time in a dorm room or army barrack. Maybe you've slept in your share of hotels or bunked in a few hostels. They have beds. They have tables. They may have food and they may be warm, but they are a far cry from being **in** your **Father's house (John 14:2).**

Your **Father's house** is where your **Father** is . . .

We don't always feel welcome here on earth. We wonder if there is a place here for us. People can make us feel unwanted. Tragedy leaves us feeling like intruders. Strangers. Trespassers in a land not ours. We don't always feel welcome here.

We shouldn't. This isn't our home. To feel unwelcome is not tragedy. Indeed it's healthy. We are not at home here. The language we speak, it's not ours. The body we wear, it isn't us. And the world we live in, this isn't home.[1456]



The fruit of **hatred** is persecution. **Yeshua** told **His talmidim** that persecution would be **their** reward in **the world**. **Remember what I told you, "A slave is not greater than his master." If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed My teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of My name, for they do not know the One who sent Me (Yochanan 15:20-21). Messiah** declared that **the world's hatred** would be directed at believers under the guise of true devotion.

Before **Jesus** came to the earth, **the hatred** of **the world** had little opportunity to vent its anger directly against **ADONAI**. **They** killed **His** prophets, corrupted **His** Word, and turned **His** house into a den of robbers, but **they** couldn't attack **God Himself**. But when **God** came in the flesh and **the world** attacked **Him** personally, there could be no more **excuses** for rejecting **Him**. **If the Lord had not come and spoken to them, their sin would not** have been so great; **but** since **the Light *had* come,** and those hard-hearted, blind enemies who so willfully rejected **the Truth** had **no excuse (Yochanan 15:22).**

The world does not **hate** the idea of **God**, *per se*. You can say you believe in **God** and **the world** will leave you alone. If you say you **love Jesus Christ**, however, you're in trouble. It's **Messiah they hate**. **Yeshua** says that **whoever hates Me hates My Father as well.** The truth of the preceding verse is further brought out and emphasized. **If Jesus had not done among them the works no one else did,** once again, **their sin would not** have been so great**. But as it is, He did come, and they have seen, and yet they have hated both Him and the Father (John 15:23-24).** Once again, **they have no excuse.**

But the nation of Isra'el unwittingly did this **to fulfill what is written in their**

Torah: "They hated Me without reason" (Yochanan 15:25). The Torah spoken of is ***their* Torah.** It would be **the Torah** that ***they*** of all people should have obeyed. **Torah** usually applies to the five books of Moses, but sometimes it is used of the TaNaKh. That must have been the case here for the passage quoted is from **Psalm 35:19** or **69:4.** These passages speak of **hatred** that lacks any reasonable foundation. It was thus that **they hated Jesus**.

Christ reminded **them** again that **they** were not left alone to fulfill **their** responsibilities. **When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father – the Spirit of Truth who goes out from the Father – He will testify about Me. The Holy Spirit will testify** to **the truth of Jesus Christ** within the believers as well as through believers to their persecutors, and others who witness their persecution. The speaker in this verse is obviously **God**, and yet **He** says **He** has been sent both by **the Father** and by **the Spirit**. **And you also must testify, for you have been with Me from the beginning (John 15:26-27).**

When the human authors of the Bible wrote their books, they wrote in the style of the time, which did not include punctuation, breaks between words, or verses or chapters. These were added by later editors and translators and are not considered inerrant like the original text. Ordinarily, the locations of chapter breaks make good, logical sense. But the break between **John 15** and **16** is unfortunate. **John 16:1-4** belongs with **Chapter 15**. It was a dark and gloomy picture that **Yeshua** had painted for **His talmidim**. Glancing at each other, **they** must have sunk back into silence. **Their** hearts were sorrowful. And no wonder, for **the Great Rabbi** had told **them** in no uncertain terms that persecution lay just ahead; a storm that **their** ship was destined soon to enter.[1457]

All this I have told you so that you will not fall away. All this refers to everything **Yeshua** just said about the believer's relationship with **the world**, which is strained at best, hostile at other times, and can become deadly. **They will put you out of the synagogue. In fact, the time is coming when anyone who kills you will think they are offering a service to God.** Persecution and death had occurred in the case of **Stephen (Acts 7:59)**, **James (Acts 12:2)**, and other followers of **the Way (Acts 9:1-4). They will do such things because they have not known the Father or Me (John 16:1-3). Messiah** revealed this to **His talmidim** so **they** would not be shaken and then stumble in **their** spiritual walk. But like many of **Christ's** lessons, **they** did not learn and all of **them** stumbled and fell nonetheless. Beginning with **His** arrest, **they** ran. During

His crucifixion, most hid. Before **His** resurrection, all lost hope. After **His** resurrection, they doubted. Only after receiving **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** did **they** act decisively and speak boldly.

The Lord's statement in **John 16:1-3** is followed here by a short parenthetical digression. **I have told you this, so that when the time comes you will remember that I warned you about them.** And then a concluding statement: **I did not tell you this from the beginning because I was with you (John 16:4).** These concluding words also transition the discussion away from **His** impending death, to the guiding of **the Spirit** after **His** ascension.

Messiah realized that **His** words would have little meaning at the time; **the apostles** still did not understand what was about to happen or why. But at the appropriate time, **His** words would come to mind and help **them** make sense of the suffering **they** faced. **They** would not have to wonder, "Are **we** struggling through persecution because of some failure on **our** part?" No, persecution was not only expected, but it is a normal consequence of living in hostile territory during the great conflict between good and evil, between **Yeshua Messiah** and the Enemy of souls, Satan. Therefore, believers all over the world should be on guard. We are headed for such a time again and we should not be surprised. **Jesus warned** us.[1458]

Jesus knew that Caiaphas wanted no disturbance in the City of David that night. **The Meshiach** had multitudes of followers among the Jews in and out of Jerusalem, and up and down the Land from Dan to Beersheba. **His** public arrest would create an uproar that might lead to rioting – and rioting always meant that the Romans would be involved.

If possible, the arrest must be done quietly. Caiaphas knew this. **Yeshua** knew this. And now with the visit of the high priest to the praetorium, Pilate knew it. The procurator would furnish help for Caiaphas. But not for the sake of peace; it was his intention to add to the troubles of the Jews by triggering an event that was bound to split them into two groups.

After the arrest, Pilate knew he could then take this little case out of the realm of secrecy and throw it, like a clump of mud, into the public eye by merely pretending that he was so interested in seeing justice done that it would be necessary to bring the prisoner through the streets to him for a fair hearing. Each man, **Jesus**, Caiaphas and Pilate, had more reasons than were at first apparent for the things each one did on this day.

That **night Judas had** already traveled to the house of Caiaphas **(John 13:30)**. **He** had been promised **his** paltry thirty pieces of silver and the high priest now expected **the betrayer** to act decisively. The Temple guard had been summoned and Pontius Pilate had assigned a tribune with five hundred men to accompany them. Caiaphas was taking no chances. The force would be overwhelming.

The high priest said that, as a dutiful son of Judah, **Judas** must be prepared to testify in the morning that **the Nazarene** had preached that **He** was **the Messiah, the Son of God** come to save the people of the world. So the niceties of proving blasphemy would be done through one of **the Lord's** own followers. How perfect. How prophetic. But **Judas** trembled. Testify? No. No, **he** could not possibly testify. Never. **Jesus** had been **his** benefactor, **his** friend. **Judas** had agreed to lead **them** to **Him**, to point **Him** out for identification, but **he** would not stand up and accuse this **man**. Caiaphas could get someone else.

But the high priest pointed out that the arrest was one thing; proof of blasphemy under Jewish law was quite another. A follower who would stand up in court and point at **Jesus** and merely tell the truth, "I heard this man say that **He** is **God** and **the Son of God**," would be sufficient. **Judas** shook **his** head stubbornly. Like a petty thief **he** knew **his** limitations, and all **he** asked for was thirty pieces of silver and freedom.

In the dim glow of the oil lamps Caiaphas smiled. **Judas** was one who would steal coins from a dead man's eyes but would ignore the big jewel on the dead man's finger. The high priest warned **him** to be ready. **He** would be needed later to lead the soldiers to **the renegade Rabbi**.[1459]